

These deferrals affect the International Security Assistance program, and the Departments of Health and Human Services and State.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1995.

**Letter to Senator Edward M.
Kennedy on the "Employment Non-
Discrimination Act"**

October 19, 1995

Dear Ted:

I am writing in regard to the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which you and Senator Jeffords have reintroduced in the current session of Congress.

As you know, discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation is currently legal in 41 states. Men and women in those states may be fired from their jobs solely because of their sexual orientation, even when it has no bearing on their job performance. Those who face this kind of job discrimination have no legal recourse, in either our state or federal courts. This is wrong.

Individuals should not be denied a job on the basis of something that has no relationship to their ability to perform their work. Sadly, as the Labor and Human Resources Committee documented last year, this kind of job discrimination is not rare. Cases of job discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation are seen in every area of our country.

The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, however, is careful to apply some exemptions in certain areas. I understand that your bill provides an exemption for small businesses, the Armed Forces, and religious organizations, including schools and other educational institutions that are substantially controlled or supported by religious organizations. This provision, which I believe is essential, respects the deeply held religious beliefs of many Americans.

Moreover, your bill specifically prohibits preferential treatment on the basis of sexual orientation, including quotas. It also does not require employers to provide special benefits.

The bill, therefore, appears to answer all the legitimate objections previously raised against it, while ensuring that Americans, regardless of their sexual orientation, can find and keep their jobs based on their ability and the quality of their work. The Employment Non-Discrimination Act is designed to protect the rights of all Americans to participate in the job market without fear of unfair discrimination. I support it.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

**Executive Order 12977—
Interagency Security Committee**

October 19, 1995

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to enhance the quality and effectiveness of security in and protection of buildings and facilities in the United States occupied by Federal employees for nonmilitary activities ("Federal facilities"), and to provide a permanent body to address continuing government-wide security for Federal facilities, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is hereby established within the executive branch the Interagency Security Committee ("Committee"). The Committee shall consist of: (a) the Administrator of General Services ("Administrator");

(b) representatives from the following agencies, appointed by the agency heads:

- (1) Department of State;
- (2) Department of the Treasury;
- (3) Department of Defense;
- (4) Department of Justice;
- (5) Department of the Interior;
- (6) Department of Agriculture;
- (7) Department of Commerce;
- (8) Department of Labor;
- (9) Department of Health and Human Services;
- (10) Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- (11) Department of Transportation;
- (12) Department of Energy;
- (13) Department of Education;
- (14) Department of Veterans Affairs;